16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

Have these needs inferred by whites actually been satisfied? No, because despite rations, rent-free houses, educational opportunities, a hospital, and old-age pensions, we still find many instances of behaviour showing that these needs still exist. In spite of rations, the largest fraction of Blackfoot income goes for groceries. Blackfoot still build houses for themselves even though they have already been provided with houses. Some Blackfoot have paid for courses in technical schools in Calgary, a few leave the reserve to attend boarding-schools, while others have sought to enter the town schools. Though the sick frequently go to the Blackfoot hospital, others hire the services of medicine-men or white physicians in neighbouring towns. Few Indians cease to work at fifty when they first receive old-age benefits. Thus we may infer that despite the presence of means satisfying their needs, these needs are not fully satisfied. At best the trust fund helps diminish the urgency of some of them.

A somewhat tender-minded visitor who was acquainted with the existing economic structure might come away from the reserve with a different impression. He might be struck with the difference in the Indian's standard of living as compared with the white's. The houses are small, frequently in rather poor repair. In some places the wells are dry, and Indians must travel to the river, a distance of several miles, to obtain water. Wood for fires must also be gathered at this distance. Sanitary facilities are often dirty, in poor repair, and sometimes lacking. Interiors are sometimes unkempt, bedding patched, and not too clean. Furnishings are adequate in some houses, but in others there may be little more than a mattress in the corner for a bed. Modern conveniences practically do not exist: only one house has running water; three houses have electricity. Though a fair sprinkling of hand-driven washing and sewing machines exists, other households seem to lack even soap and thread. A few men own automobiles, but most travel by horse and wagon. As compared with middle-class whites, there is obviously a lower standard of living among the Indians on the reserve.

Do the Blackfoot feel a need for an improved standard of living? An unqualified answer cannot be given. Certain improvements seem to be rather universally desired, while others are seldom referred to. Judging by the activity shown in these directions, Blackfoot would like more food, better clothing, warmer housing, and larger amounts of furnishings. Many informants went to the nearest store as soon